

S-2,538

CIA No. 5078
11 December 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mrs. Evelyn Colbert
Chief, Southeast Asia Division, INR/REA/SA
Department of State

SUBJECT : Transmittal of OER Project S-2538, Supplementary
Documentation of Communist Use of Cambodia for
Infiltration of Personnel to South Vietnam.

The attached contribution is forwarded in response to your request
of 4 December 1967.

3.5(c)

[Redacted]
Chief, Thailand, Laos and Cambodia

Attachment: a/s

cc: [Redacted] 3.5(c)
DIAAP

Distribution: (S-2358)
Orig & 1 - Addressee
2 - D/OER
1 - St/EX
1 - St/CS
1 - St/P/C ✓
1 - SAVA
1 - OCI
1 - IRA
1 - D/I
2 - I/TLC

OER/I/TLC [Redacted] (11 Dec 67) 3.5(c)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

The Infiltration of North Vietnamese
Communist Forces Through Cambodia To
South Vietnam

OER Project No. S-2538

11 December 1967

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The Infiltration of North Vietnamese Communist Forces
Through Cambodia to South Vietnam

1. Reports from more than one hundred PW's and ralliers indicate that North Vietnamese infiltrators to Communist VC/NVA forces in South Vietnam during 1966-67 moved on foot through Laos, eastern Cambodia and South Vietnam. Within Cambodia, the trail network extends from the Laotian border southward, at least as far as Kompong Chan Province, although the majority of the infiltrators entered South Vietnam from Ratanakiri and Mondolkiri Provinces. The trails traverse sparsely populated areas of Cambodia, usually within a few kilometers of its border with South Vietnam. The paths seldom are more than one meter wide, and for the most part are concealed from aerial view by dense foliage. The two or three largest rivers were crossed by boat.

2. Troop movements through Cambodia were made in stages, with overnight stops for rest and replenishment at stations located 500 or more yards off the trail at intervals of approximately 15 kilometers. Guides, either North Vietnamese or Montagnard, worked in relays on inter-station runs, returning north over their sections with mail and despatches. Stations and food caches were guarded by details of North Vietnamese troops; in addition, larger units were encamped at scattered points along the way, presumably for patrolling and protecting the trail. Small groups of Cambodian soldiers occasionally appeared but were not obstructive. Weapons and ammunition were carried south by the infiltrators and by some local relay teams, but rice and some other foods were obtained within Cambodia.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3. The following excerpts from POW interrogations validate and amplify these conclusions:

a. [redacted]

[redacted] infiltrated through Laos and Cambodia to Station 5, Pleiku Province, South Vietnam, during the first half of 1966. In Cambodia, he moved southward along jungle trails and then shifted westward along National Highway No. 19 to a camp in the vicinity of Bo Keo, over 30 kilometers west of the South Vietnamese border, where he appears to have served four months as a Medic. The group to which he was attached transported rice and other foods, and also, [redacted] weapons and ammunition. He entered South Vietnam [redacted] moved forward to Chu Phong Mountain and shortly thereafter rallied to the South Vietnamese forces.,

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

b. [redacted]

[redacted] departed North Vietnam [redacted] to infiltrate South Vietnam. His movement was stated to have been through Laos into South Vietnam and then into Cambodia, terminating at Station 4 south of Route 19 near the border of South Vietnam. Toward the end of September, the unit moved eastward about fifteen miles into Pleiku Province, South Vietnam, to An Ta (13°41' N, 107°46' E), where the troops constructed long houses and rice depots. Troops then worked in details carrying rice and ammo from Station 4, Cambodia, to An Ta. The winter was spent mostly at Station 5, practically on the border, nine miles south of Station 4. From March to May 1966, the unit moved into Darlac Province,

3.3(h)(2)

- 2 -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

South Vietnam, and unsuccessfully attacked Bang Don post. It then returned to Station 4 in order to "protect the rear base." In June, it was ordered to attack Chu Ba post near Beng Village, Pleiku, after which it returned to Station 4. A month later it moved to Ya Breng near An Ta, where it was attacked and withdrew to Station 5 "to protect the rear base." In December 1966, the Battalion moved to Buon Ho in Darlac Province, South Vietnam and in February 1967, attacked Do Lung Village

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

infiltrated into South Vietnam via Laos and Cambodia between July and September 1965. His unit spent about four days in Cambodia in early September, entering from Attapeu Province, Laos, and departing into Kontum Province, South Vietnam. In Cambodia the troops passed four ration supply stations approximately 15 kilometers apart. At one station they received rice, salt, sugar and nuts. The supply stations were manned by seven NVA soldiers each. three or four NVA units of approximate company size camped at intervals along the infiltration trail, apparently to guard the route. He also passed a checkpoint manned by five Cambodian soldiers who "looked the other way."

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

infiltrated through Cambodia in late 1964. His group apparently walked the entire distance from Laos, through Cambodian

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

territory, to Tay Ninh Province in South Vietnam on trails located within 10 kilometers of the SVN border. In 1966, [] transferred from Phuoc Long Province in SVN to An Giang Province in SVN. Again he transited Cambodian territory. During the latter journey he claimed to have had many contacts with Cambodian military personnel who knew that he and his companions were members of the VC. During his service in Phuoc Long [] in 1966, his group often picked up supplies that had been delivered to the border by Cambodian military vehicles. []

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

e. A North Vietnamese combat infantryman (identified only as [] infiltrated from NVN to SVN in the period March - September 1965 [] In August or September his unit transited Cambodia, crossing Route 19 and proceeding south to Station 4. In March 1966, his battalion transferred rice among various storage areas in Cambodia near the border with Pleiku Province, SVN.

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

[]
he was a patient in Front Hospital V2. This hospital was located in Cambodia six kilometers from the Ia Drang River and ten kilometers from the border of South Vietnam. It treated NVA troops infiltrating into South Vietnam as well as VC who had been wounded in actions in or near Pleiku Province, South Vietnam.

3.3(h)(2)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3.3(h)(2)

[REDACTED]

3.3(h)(2)

[REDACTED] From June 1966 until April 1967 he was assigned to the Rear Service Section, which based its operations in Cambodia adjacent to the An Phu District of South Vietnam. He transported supplies -- predominantly ammunition and weapons -- from the bank of the Mekong River to nearby points in Cambodia [REDACTED] high-security VC storage areas. The supplies had been brought across the Mekong from Kien Phong Province in South Vietnam. [REDACTED] the local Cambodian authorities placed no restriction on VC movements at night, but the VC had to be very discreet in daylight hours. VC in the area often farmed, fought, or otherwise occupied themselves in South Vietnam in the daytime, but "returned to Cambodia at night for security."

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

[REDACTED]

3.3(h)(2)

group proceeded into Laos, entering Thua Thien Province, South Vietnam, in March where it attacked the A San post. Returning to Laos in early April, the Group followed the commo-liaison trail into Cambodia as far as Station 4 where it remained for one month to regain strength and train for combat. The trails through Laos and Cambodia were not over 1.5 meters in width. The group crossed numerous rivers and streams, some by boat, as well as two lakes, a few open fields and hills. It

- 5 -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3.3(h)(2)

crossed Route 19 near Station 4. [redacted] one North Vietnamese Army Engineer Unit working on the trail in Cambodia with picks and shovels.

Early in June, the Group entered Pleiku Province, South Vietnam, and set up a base camp near Duc Co from which to mount attacks on the A ME airstrip. In September, the unit shifted north to Kontum Province, [redacted] late in October, he was assigned [redacted] On 21 November, he went to pick up rice for the unit [redacted]

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

[redacted] 3.3(h)(2)

[redacted]

Prior to making their first stop in Cambodia, Company Commanders informed the troops that if Cambodian troops should fire at them, they should withdraw rather than return the fire, because to fire back would "violate international law." The troops moved through Cambodian forest for about four days on a trail that was "easy to walk on". They crossed the Sesan (Tonle San) River in boats that carried four men apiece, and about two hours later passed over National Route 19. They arrived at the border of Pleiku Province and subsequently organized for operations. [redacted]

3.3(h)(2)

3.3(h)(2)

While moving along the trail in Cambodian territory, subject noticed many groups of civilians of ethnic minorities carrying cases of 82 mm mortar, 75 mm and K.56 shells. Each group had nine or ten people, the majority of whom were women. He also encountered a supply group with two elephants transporting rice to a rear base storage point.

- 6 -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[REDACTED] 3.3(h)(2)

[REDACTED] started to infiltrate

to South Vietnam in December 1965. He travelled through Laos and the northeastern corner of Cambodia, arriving in Kontum province, South Vietnam, about April 1966, and in May moving down to the Phu Yen - Darlac border. After an encounter with U.S. Forces in June 1966 [REDACTED]

3.3(h)(2)

[REDACTED] remained in Phu Yen until October, when it transferred south to the Ninh Hoa district of Khanh Hoa Province nearer the coast. There in February 1967, it engaged the ROK White Horse Division and suffered moderate losses. [REDACTED]

3.3(h)(2)

- 7 -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~